

REMARKS

Claims 1–11, 14, 15, 26–34 and 36 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 1 is amended and claim 35 is canceled. Support for the amendment to claim 1 can be found, for example, in canceled claim 35. No new matter is added. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and prompt allowance at least in view of the following remarks.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 because the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration; and (c) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to the notice of allowable subject matter as noted in the Office Action. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1–9, 11 and 26–31 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,580,042 (Taniguro) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,712,357 (Tranquilla) and U.S. Patent No. 5,182,861 (Suzuki). The Office Action rejects claims 14 and 15 over Taniguro in view of Tranquilla (and presumably Suzuki) in further view of U.S. Patent No. 4,619,451 (Dodge). The Office Action objects to claims 35 and 36 but notes that claims 35 and 36 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

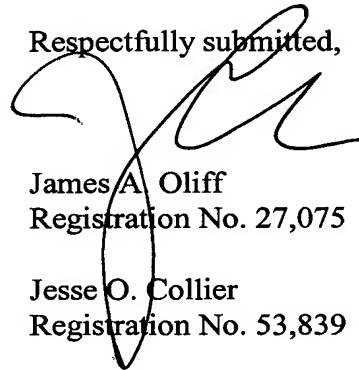
Applicant amends claim 1 by incorporating the allowed features of claim 35. As noted in the Office Action and by incorporating the allowed features of claim 35, claim 1 is patentable. As dependent claims 2–9, 11, 14, 15, 26–31 and 36 depend from currently amended claim 1, the dependent claims are patentable, at least in view of the patentability of

claim 1, as well as for the additional features they recite. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the above rejections and objection.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-11, 14, 15, 26-34 and 36 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: April 24, 2008

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